

(Of the 'savage comic humour' of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*—
which Mr. Eliot for some extraordinary reason takes
for a farce instead of a tragedy—as expressed in the last words of
Barabas:

But now begins th* extremity of heat
To pinch me with intolerable pangs:
Die, life! fly, soul! tongue, curse thy fill, and die!)
It is something which Shakespeare could not do,
and which he
could not have understood.

(Of *Hamlet*.)

So far from being Shakespeare's masterpiece, the
pky is most
certainly an artistic failure.

(Again of *Hamlet*.)

The character has had an especial temptation for
that most dan-
gerous type of critic: the critic with a mind which is
naturally of the
creative order, but which through some weakness in
creative power
exercises itself in criticism instead. . . . Such a mind
had Goethe,
who made of *Hamlet* a "Werther; and such had
Coleridge, who made
of *Hamlet* a Coleridge.

There are people who would put up, at a
pinch, with
'a weakness in creative power' as great as
Goethe's; and
•who are too dull to see why it is so much
better to regard
Hamlet as 'a failure* than to regard him as a
Werther. And
it is hard, too, to resist an indiscreet curiosity
whether Mr.
Eliot thinks himself a better judge in this
matter than
Coleridge or Goethe on the theory that he
has himself
no creative power; or on the theory that he
has no
weaknesses in it. Be that as it may, when a
critic finds
in 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' or the *Ode
on a Grecian
Urn* prentice-work inferior to Crashaw;
and expunges
Romanticism from literature with a stroke
of his pen;
and knows better than Wordsworth himself

how Wordsworth felt when writing poetry; and prefers
Coriolanus to *Hamlet*; and can tell us for certain that
Shakespeare could not have written parts of *The Jew of*
Malta, or even understood them; it becomes pretty clear
that he has not,